

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 01305 261552Z

42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 DHA-02 L-03 H-02 IO-11

SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 /062 W

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O R 261530Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5751

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1305

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR YO

SUBJ: MIHAJLOV AND POPOVIC CASES

REF: A. STATE 45364 (NOTAL) B. BELGRADE 1232 (NOTAL) C.

BELGRADE 1000

1. IN REPLY TO PRESS INQUIRIES SECRETARIAT FOR INFORMATION
STATED FEB 25 THAT MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV HAS BEEN
EXAMINED BY TWO DOCTORS THIS WEEK AND FOUND NOT TO BE IN
A DANGEROUS CONDITION.

2. MIHAJLOV'S HUNGER STRIKE HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED IN
YUGOSLAV PRESS. FEB 24 EDITION OF INTERNATIONAL HERALD
TRIBUNE, WHICH CARRIED FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY
DUSKO DODER ABOUT MIHAJLOV, IS NOT AVAILABLE LOCALLY, AND GOY HAS
PRESUMABLY BANNED DISTRIBUTION, AS IT DOES WHEN FOREIGN
MEDIA CARRY UNFLATTERING STORIES ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA. EMBASSY
DID RECEIVE COPIES AIRMAILED FROM PARIS.

3. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED CONFIDENTIALLY THAT MIHAJLOV'S
WIFE IS SOURCE OF RECENT REPORTS ON HIS CONDITION. WE
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PAGE 02 BELGRA 01305 261552Z

UNDERSTAND MIHAJLOV WALKED TO PRISON VISITING ROOM TO SEE HER,

AND IS THEREFORE AT LEAST AMBULATOR.

4. ANOTHER POLITICAL CASE IS LIKELY TO RECEIVE INTER-NATIONAL ATTENTION NEXT WEEK. LAWYER SRDJAN POPOVIC WILL GO ON TRIAL MAR 1 IN VALJEVO FOR SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION DURING HIS DEFENSE OF A POLITICAL DISSIDENT. ACCORDING TO FEB 26 "POLITIKA", POPOVIC SENT LETTERS TO MANY YUGOSLAV LAWYERS CHARGING THAT HIS INDICTMENT HAS DAMAGED THE RIGHTS OF ALL DEFENSE LAWYERS. IN RESPONSE, "POLITIKA" REPORTS LOCAL EQUIVALENT OF BAR ASSOCIATION AND LAWYER'S CELL OF LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS IN BELGRADE HAVE CIRCULATED STATEMENT WHICH URGES CAUTION IN BRINGING CHARGES AGAINST LAWYERS, BUT DENIES POPOVIC'S ALLEGATION AND ATTACKS HIM IN TURN. IT CONDEMNS HIS BEHAVIOR AFTER BEING INDICTED AND PARTICULARLY "HIS ADDRESSING THOSE ABROAD". THE STATEMENT CHARGES THAT POPOVIC HAS CREATED A FALSE PICTURE OF THE POSITION OF DEFENSE LAWYERS AND DAMAGED THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND THE COMMUNITY.

5. COMMENT: TREATMENT OF DISSIDENTS PROMISES TO TARNISH IF NOT BLACKEN YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION, AS IT HAS IN THE CASE OF THE SOVIET UNION. WE BELIEVE CRITICISM BY DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OR CPS'S IN WEST WOULD PARTICULARLY STING AND MIGHT BE EFFECTIVE IN HELPING MIHAJLOVS AND POPOVICS OF YUGOSLAVIA.
SWEITZER

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